

West Belfast LPG Meeting

Whiterock Day Centre, 6 Whiterock Grove, Belfast, BT12 7RQ

Wednesday 20th March 2024 at 10am

Name	Organisation	Present	Apology
Charlene Mitchell	LPG Coordinator, BHSCCT	✓	
Deirdre Walsh	LPG Chair	✓	
Caoimhe McKenna	Papryus	✓	
Elizabeth Verner	Greater Shankill FSH	✓	
Bernadette Donaghy	Depaul	✓	
Stephen Rafferty	Universal Credit Programme, Dept. for Communities	✓	
Carole Bailie	Upper Springfield/Whiterock FSH	✓	
Piarais McCaffery	Kids Together Belfast	✓	
Alice McGlone	Belfast City Council		✓
Aoife Boyle	Princes Trust		✓
Aisling Reynolds	Action for Children		✓
Bridget Tiernan	BHSCCT		✓
Cara McCann	Here NI		✓
Carol Bailie	USW FSH		✓
Catherine Beatty	BHSCCT		✓
Dympna Johnston	Spectrum Centre		✓
Gareth Maquire	Sports Changes Life		✓
Jim Donnelly	Active Communities		✓
Jonathon Cockroft	EANI		✓
Joy Robinson	Aware NI		✓
Julia Huges	Bryson Energy		✓
Penny Ambrose	Blackie River		✓
Mairead Gilmartin	Outer West SureStart, BHSCCT		✓
Niall Enright	USDT		✓
Nuala McStravick	Bryson Energy		✓
Paddy Gallagher	EANI		✓
Peter Bryson	Save the Children		✓
Phil Lindsay	Barnados		✓
Rachelle McCurry	Active Communities		✓
Sharon Nelson	Whiterock Children's Centre		✓
Sinead Campbell	Advice NI		✓
Sinead McConnell	Ionad Uibh Eachach		✓
Val Rowan	BHSCCT		✓
Nicola Masterson	Outer West FSH		✓
In Attendance			
Jennifer Heverin	LPG Administration, BHSCCT	✓	
Charlotte Gunton	LPG Administration, BHSCCT	✓	

Summary of Actions:

	Topic	Action	Responsibility

1. Welcome and Introduction

Deirdre opened the meeting by welcoming those present and facilitating a round of introductions.

2. Previous Minutes of 24th January 2024

The minutes were read through and agreed to be an accurate transcription.

3. Presentation – Department for Communities, Universal Credit Programme

Following a discussion at the last West Belfast LPG meeting regarding some confusion around the move from legacy benefits to Universal Credit, Stephen Rafferty from Department for Communities Universal Credit Programme kindly agreed to present at today's meeting and give some guidance.

Universal Credit was introduced in 2017 for new claims. Now everyone on benefits and tax credits will be moving to Universal Credit.

The move was initially piloted with 500 participants in receipt of tax credits only who live in the Enniskillen and Andersonstown areas. Following this, the scheme was rolled out on 16th October 2023 to all tax credit customers and this is currently ongoing and due to end around April.

Process:

A migration letter is issued to customers who then have 3 months and 1 day to make their claim. The letter states this date as well as what they need to do next. If no action is taken then reminders are issued via text and letter at weeks 3, 7 and 10. If no response had been taken by the final date then they are removed from the claim process.

Support:

There are various avenues of support throughout the transition process:

- Dedicated telephone support team. They can be contacted on 0800 012 1331
- NI Direct page: www.nidirect.gov.uk/movetouniversalcredit
- Jobs and Benefits offices
- Referrals can also be made to onward support based on individual circumstances.

5-week Waiting Period:

The first Universal Credit payment is made 5 weeks after submitting the claim. If anyone is struggling in this time there are a number of options to help:

- Contingency Fund Grant. This is not repayable.
- Advance Loan. This is repayable over 12-24 months.
- Discretionary Support. This can be a loan or grant depending on circumstances.

Transitional Protection:

If following the switch a person is assessed as being entitled to a lower amount than they were receiving on their tax credits, then a top-up will be awarded to bring them up to their original amount. This will erode over time until the amount will be back to the Universal Credit assessed amount.

Eligibility:

- If a person has over £16,000 in savings they normally will not receive Universal Credit, however, if they are switching from Tax Credits, this rule will not apply and they will still be eligible for a Universal Credit application.
- Self-Employed people will enter a start-up period and there will be no taper on earnings.
- A full-time student can also apply if they are moving from legacy benefits.

Deductions:

- Although Transitional Protection will be applicable, deductions will still be made for any outstanding debts such as rent arrears, court fines etc. This deduction can be up to 25%. However, anyone struggling to manage can speak to the debt management team.

4. FSH Updates

FSH Area:	Outer West Belfast
Timeframe:	January 2024 – March 2024 (@19/03/2024)
Number of Service Requests Received in timeframe:	January – 19 February – 23 March – 21 (@19/03/2024)
Number of Service Requests Received to date:	YTD - 307
Source of Service Requests:	Community Self School EWO GP RISE NI Health Visitor MDT
Key Gaps identified:	<p>More services needed around - ASD Supports / Play therapy</p> <p>Lack of local services available – at capacity / waiting lists.</p>
Key Successes identified:	<p>Still continuing to support families with remaining vouchers from BCC funding (very few remaining)</p>
AOB for Sharing:	

FSH Area:	Upper Springfield/Whiterock FSH
Timeframe:	February and March
Number of Service Requests Received in timeframe:	February 31 March 18 Total 49
Number of Service Requests Received to date:	350 referrals to Date.
Source of Service Requests:	Self-referrals Schools Health Visitors
Key Gaps identified:	
<p>Increase in housing support referrals, families either homeless or living with family.</p> <p>ASD, Child Counselling, Play Therapy all unavailable due to capacity.</p> <p>No support at all available for families with children with complex needs.</p>	
Key Successes identified:	
<p>Families supported through the social supermarket via USDT.</p> <p>Also funding through BCC Hub referral necessary for this fund.</p> <p>Behaviour support program in conjunction with Parenting NI organised and attended by local parents this was arranged on the backend of increased referrals from local school for additional behaviour support.</p> <p>International food fair attended by Whiterock children and family centre parents supplied traditional dishes even though they had started Ramadan.</p> <p>120 local families supported to apply for Bryson house Electric fund. This has now ended.</p>	
AOB for Sharing:	
Some voucher available funded through the BCC to support families with the cost-of-living crisis.	

FSH Area:	Greater Shankill
Timeframe:	Jan-March 2024 January 20 February 14 March 9
Number of Service Requests Received in timeframe:	43
Number of Service Requests Received to date:	214
Source of Service Requests:	School CAMHS GP EWO Health Visitor Self School Nurse Family Support Worker Social Worker Practice Nurse Community Worker
Key Gaps identified: -ASD supports for parents awaiting assessment for children. -Complementary Therapies -Art Therapy (ASD)	
Key Successes identified: -Isolated young person from Roma Community sign posted to Roma Support Hub. -All Family Support Hub vouchers have been given out to families. This has provided families with fuel/food and winter essentials. -Families connected with Social Supermarket via GSCC. -Families requesting family support have been connected with a service provider.	
AOB for Sharing: None	

FSH Area:	Greater Falls	
Timeframe:	Feb – Mar 24 (to date)	
Number of Service Requests Received in timeframe:	87	
Number of Service Requests Received to date:	349 (in year)	
Source of Service Requests:	School Community CAMHS Self GP MDT Social Worker Gateway	Health Visitor Voluntary Organisation EWO
Key Gaps identified:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited supports for disability, limited child therapy supports. • Lengthy waiting lists for additional needs • People struggling to gain access to GP with little or no Face to Face supports within surgery. • Thresholds continuing to rise amongst statutory services placing more pressure on Hubs to meet demand. • Cuts to community services and insufficient packages to meet needs of FSH referrals • Housing for families (both temporary and permanent) 		
Key Successes identified:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Supermarket availability to families across Greater Falls area to meet needs for families experiencing financial strain. • BCC funding to support families with financial difficulties. (Gas/Elec and food vouchers) 		

	<p>5. Members Updates</p> <p>No updates from members</p>
	<p>6. LPG Updates</p> <p><i>i) LPG Membership</i> In order to have an up to date LPG mailing list and to comply with GDPR regulations, a Microsoft form has been circulated. It is vital that all members wishing to remain part of the Locality Planning Groups complete this list by 19th April 2024. If you do not complete your name will be removed from the mailing list and membership will cease.</p> <p><i>ii) CYPSP</i> A reminder that The CYPSP Youth Wellness Hub and Translation Hub are available and have a range of resources. Translations – Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) (hscni.net) Youth Wellness Web – Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) (hscni.net)</p> <p><i>ii) Training</i> Vape Training will be taking place on 10th April in Whiterock Health Centre. Information has been circulated, booking is essential.</p> <p>A scoping exercise will be completed shortly to identify any gaps in training, training needs and member feedback.</p> <p><i>iv) Asylum seeking families/ Dispersal Programme</i></p> <p>Asylum Seeking Families / Dispersal programme out of hotels and into communities was raised at the most recent Belfast Area Outcomes Group meeting. Mears Housing are accessing a lot of community accommodation to facilitate the dispersal programme across NI. This is going a growing concern – families are being moved place to place with very short notice and often times into areas already in deprivation therefore chances to integrate and of employment is limited. It was felt that this was an important issue that should be raised with the Family Support Hubs who may be impacted by developments. For families with children who do not receive leave to remain as there is no deportation policy, the Health Trusts that families are located within will be required to provide support.</p> <p><i>v) Venues</i> If anyone has any venues that future LPG meetings could be hosted in please let Charlene or Deirdre know.</p>
	<p>7. A.O.B</p>

	No other business was discussed and the meeting drew to a close with Deidre thanking all those in attendance.
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2024 Dates for West Belfast LPG Ordinary Meetings

DATES (Wednesday)	TIME	VENUES
24 th January	10am	Microsoft Teams
20 th March	11am	Whiterock Health Centre
22 nd May	11am	TBA
TBA July	10am	TBA
18 th September	10am	TBA
20 th November	10am	TBA